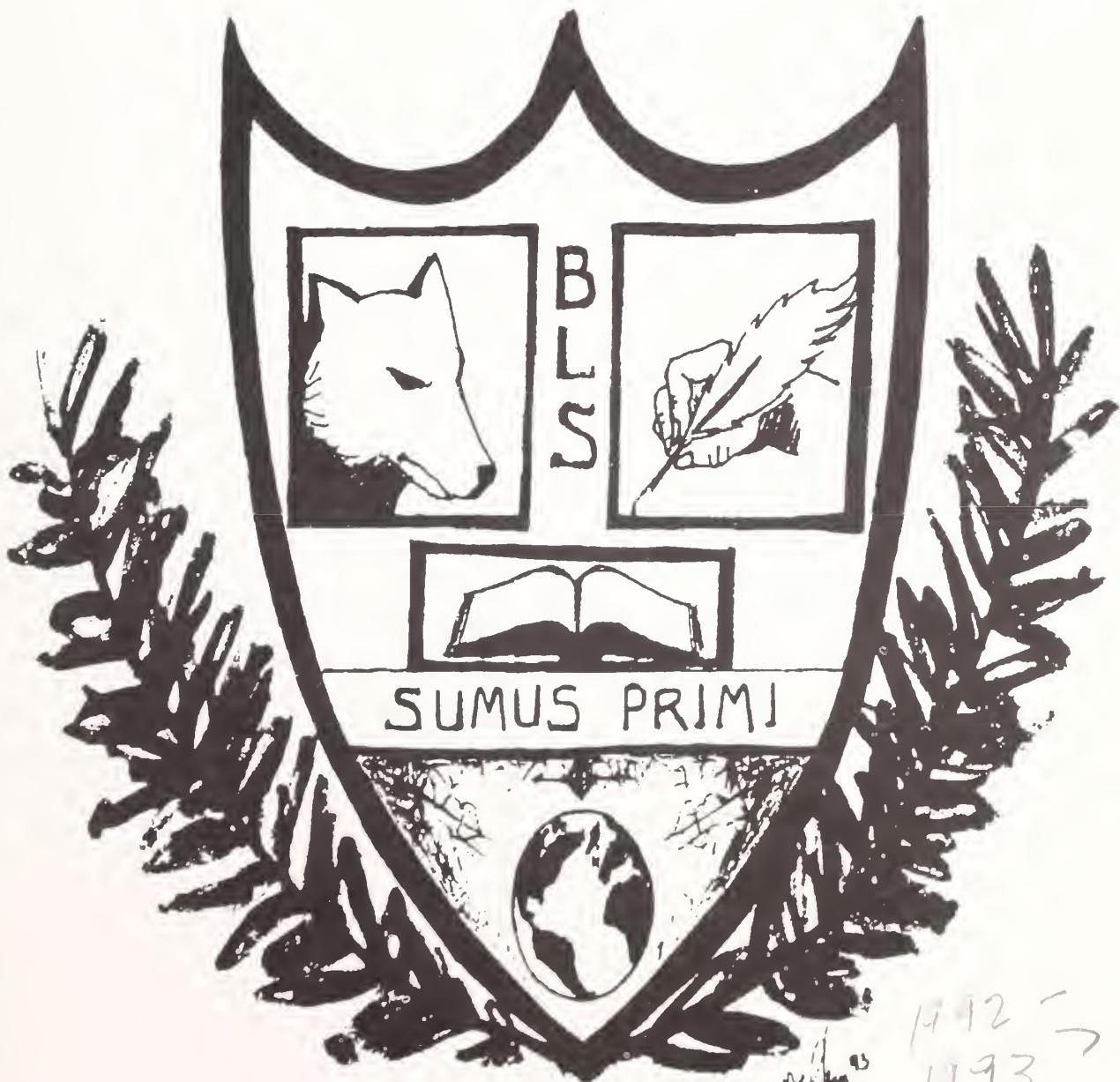


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Special Thanks To

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Ed Girvan
All the Little People

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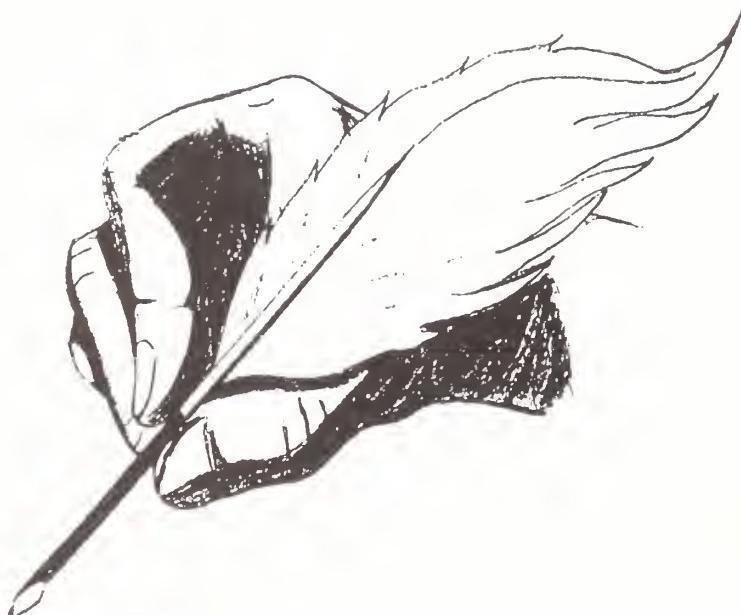
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My Sweet Italian Doll

Kimberly Giunta

my sweet italian doll
 open arms of snowy pink marble
 radiating warmth and love
 long strands of woven gold
 framing eyes of coal
 and a mouth stained raspberry
 petite and pretty
 almost shy
 peeking over dusty stuffed animals
 and worn books
 a fond childhood memory
 growing with me into adulthood
 changing as i changed
 always honest
 always there for me
 always my friend

The Spectator

Kelly O'Rourke

Forever on the outside,
 Forever looking in,
 Forever wondering how and why,
 I never can begin
 To even start to tell him
 How, each time I see his face;
 The way his eyes can mesmerize
 My heart...quicken its pace.
 So long a while I've studied him,
 His eyes, his smile, his stride.
 For years and years I've felt the tears
 This tender heart has cried.
 Each time I saw another girl
 Or heard another name,
 All my hopes, my dreams, my world
 Would burn in envious flames.
 But still, I sigh, and still, I try;
 Again, I cry, and yet
 We all want most the things in life
 Impossible to get.

Empty Words

Kimberly Giunta

empty words echo off the walls
 repetitious lies ricochet back and forth
 in the cavern of my mind

 once filled with love and light and laughter
 replaced by a cynical maze of disbelief

 love is sunk when trust is broken
 light smothered when betrayal sneaks in
 and laughter dead where honesty means nothing

 why speak if you speak the death of a word?



a painted-on smile

Kimberly Giunta

the clown
 in bright costume
 and frizzy orange hair
 moves from the car
 behind others dressed quite similarly
 dancing and juggling
 under the big striped tent
 between lions and tigers and bears
 a comical grin attached below the nose
 fire engine red against snow white
 a painted on smile
 popcorn-eating spectators
 too far away to care
 or too close to see
 the diamond teardrops smearing the paint
 of the sad clown

In Memory of Charles

Danielle Holland

I find out when I go back to the Blue Hill Tennis Club. It's springtime. and tennis season has just started at school. My former tennis coach Herb has relocated to the club I used to frequent, for Sunday afternoon clinics. I go there to play a few rounds and take a few hits off him.

It is two years since I've last seen him. He looks tired, depressed. Older - old, even. I am picking up the balls when he asks me, "Did you hear about Charlie?" The Charlie he is referring to is Charles Hardison, a promising young black tennis star at the Sportsman's Tennis Club. When I did the tournament circuit a few years ago, I saw him around a lot.

"No. What about him?" I bend over to pick up a few balls on my racket. It isn't till I stand up and see his face that I know that something is wrong, horribly, horribly wrong.

"It's terrible. I was just playing with him yesterday. He plays at Milton and you know... I was coaching him... He made an appointment with me for today... we were just gonna hit. But this morning, he didn't show up and when I called to find out what was wrong..." Herb pauses, inhaling sharply. Every wrinkle on his face seems to magnify. "I was just calling to find out why he didn't show up... Oh God..." I stand transfixed, not daring to breathe. I feel an awful taste, like lead filings, polluting my mouth. I am living in slow motion. "He was shot last night. In his own house... I was talking to him last night. They told me I was the last one to talk to him while he was still alive... In his own house, for God's sake." Tears are welling in his eyes.

In all the time I've known Herb this is probably the most I've ever heard him say all at once. But now nothing matters.

By the time I get home the news has spread. Pictures of Charles are splashed all over television and his prom picture is draped on the front pages of all the newspapers.

Herb calls and tells us when the funeral

will be held. He says he'll meet us there. A lot of the kids from Sportsman's don't want to go; they say they won't feel comfortable. For me there is no choice. I have to go. I have to remember him somehow; I have to say good bye.

When my father drops my mother and me off at the small Baptist church in the South End, we meet Herb. I've never seen him dressed up before. He looks different, but he still looks old. There are already long lines of mourners outside the church. People are crying. The smell and the sounds of grief are everywhere. Someone hands us a pamphlet. A hymn booklet. Old friends from Sportsman's thank us for coming. You're welcome. There are nurses standing at the front of the church, their white uniforms starched crisply. It's whispered that people have been fainting.

Slowly we inch inevitably towards the coffin. Despite my vicious queasiness I am still drawn to it. It's an open casket. He was shot in the head and they have done a good job covering it. Only a thin netted veil lies over his face.

We go back to the pews. After some of his friends from school give their respects, the kids Charles used to teach file in. One by one they place a tennis racket on an alter near the coffin.

His mother, his sister, and his girlfriend Antoinette enter. Antoinette is wearing a black dress with polka-dotted ruffles. His mother can barely stand up. People flock to support her as she staggers toward her slaughtered son. Other people have been weeping but not like her. She sobs uncontrollably, each cry wrenching raggedly from her gut. Rocking herself back and forth, she stares strickenly at the child she's lost. "Oooohhh... my baby... my baby... Oh Lord, not my baby..."

I sit numbly. After what seems like no particular amount of time a man on the microphone starts the memorial service. I look

In memory of Charles (Cont'd)

up at the stained glass windows and I realize that every Sunday till today Charlie sat in this same church. Maybe his eyes had wandered over the same bloody colors as mine now do. The scarlet reds, the crimson hues and the tranquil blues filter through the colored sections and spill onto the floor. He used to sing in the choir here.

By now the lines have multiplied considerably. For some reason I begin to feel guilty. I'm taking up somebody's place. I've had my chance. It's someone else's turn to honor Charles. Someone else deserves my seat.

As we leave the church, I hear his mother again. I hear the anguished cries. We are outside the church. There are three hundred people clogging the entrance. The police have been called to regulate the traffic of all kinds.

We're walking down the street. The sky is a dazzling shade of cerulean blue, the clouds are stainlessly white and the scent of green spring lingers in the flawless breeze. The sun glints off the broken glass on the sidewalk. It's a beautiful day. Perfect tennis weather.

Too True

Kelly O'Rourke

My face is too plain to be pretty
My eyes are too brown to be blue;
My words are too weak to be witty
And my heart is too, too fond of you.

To me your sweet voice is a love song
And the words which you speak are the tune
That I hear and I hum
And my heart seems to drum
Each evening 'til morning 'til noon.

Your smile's so warm, like a summer's night;
Your eyes shine so bright, like the stars
That I secretly wish upon, hoping we might
smile's so warm, like a summer's night;
Someday, not be so apart.

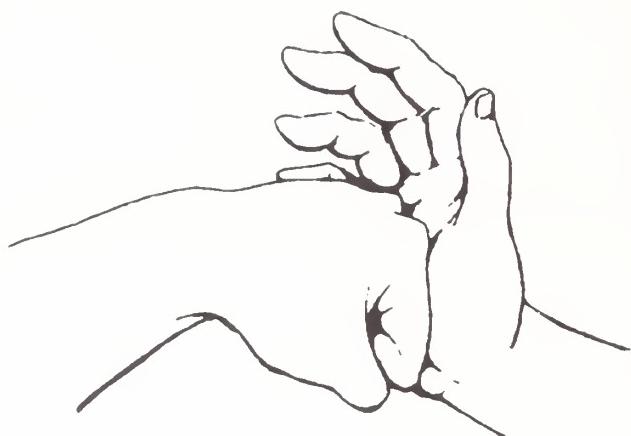
When I see just the slightest resemblance of
Your beautiful face, my heart soars;
But then sinks once again when remembrance,
Love,,
Reminds me I'll never be yours.

Too idle are wishes I've wasted;
Too strong is this blind love to see;
Too bitter are tears I have tasted...
Too bad you're so too good for me.

Searching for Atlantis

Malka Older

So deep
 in the hidden blue sea
 voices trapped in the
 smooth hard clear globes
 to hold the sea back from
 rushing in and
 filling the mouth
 silencing the Stories
 they found the ruins
 of a place that never
 existed
 Destroyed without
 Being.
 desperate to speak
 to know the fabulous Story
 they would have let the
 blue sea rush in and
 fill the mouth
 silencing the Stories
 but one Word was written
 darkly on a
 deep sea rock:
 Atlantis
 a Story
 hidden by the blue sea
 but not forgotten
 by the dark
 Words.



Instinct

Malka Older

When I make a fist,
 Five years of karate classes,
 Twice a week,
 Two hours a day,
 Become one second of
 Tight fingers,
 Straight wrists,
 Thumb curled,
 Instinctively.



Let Me Eat Your Perfect Babies

Damian Bartlett

I am coils of flowering grace and cooled liquid power.

I swim through the slow green tides
Of brush and leaf-
Smooth
Streaming

Slick with the oiled grace of a silvery blade
As it slides through the still water
Of a crisp dawn's pool.

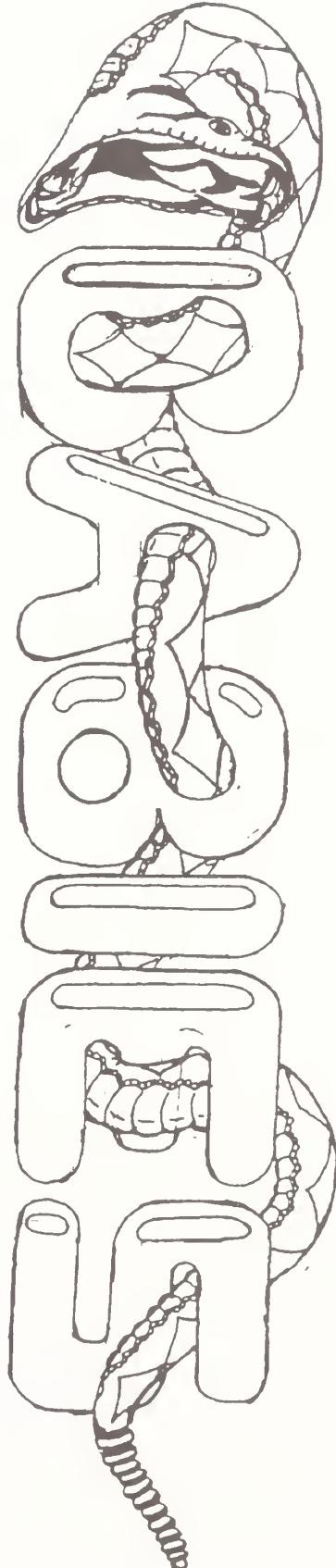
All muscles in silk,
Steel cords in satin,

Embraces of mortal onyx with flickers of wispy
Kisses.

Kisses of dry, brisk autumn leaves
Sleepily swaying within
An opium breeze.

But if they saw me here,
Sunning brashly
In the garden,
They could see the
Mucous-oozing, spineless lout
I am.

They know I want their children,
Their oh-so perfect children,
To sink my long sleek jaws into
Their sweat and mud and hair.



Flag Poem

Julia Brookins

The following poem was written in response to the spearing of a black man by white rioter, during the 1974 busing crisis in Boston. The weapon used was the American flag.

I should have stayed in the cab.
 All these people!
 My flag!
 Why am I here,
 What have I done?
 The great free eagle!
 Why does it choose me for its martyr?
 I am a man,
 These are not.
 No man would do this
 With my flag.

The red is for blood, yes,
 I know that.
 But not mine.
 It's for blood shed by the enemy.
 These are Americans;
 They are not the enemy.
 Or are they?

I am a man;
 These are not men.
 Men could not do this to a life.
 Or could they?

The End?

Kelly O'Rourke

When Sorrow's eyes have cried their tears
 And Heaven's love has rained,
 And hearts lie shred by silver shears
 And blood no longer stains;

When Honesty and Innocence
 Are challenged by a Wonder,
 And shock is shown by lightning
 And secrets told by thunder;

When lies appear to be the truth
 And Truth's deceived by Lies;
 And victim one and victim two
 Scorn one another's eyes;

When Loss and Grief and Disbelief
 Replace part of a treasure;
 All that's left is scarred and marred:
 What's gone is gone forever.

When the strong long chain between two friends
 Has come to its final link,
 The courage to just let go of the end
 Is tougher to find than we think.



Value Judgement

Daniel Older

The paper that most teachers preferred to call tests, but looked more like ancient scriptures that had seen several centuries come and go, and seemed as if they were written in some extinct dialect that when it was used, was only used when talking to inanimate objects like vacuum cleaners, loomed out of its two dimensional form at me, waiting silently for me to make my move, preparing what part of my body it would maul first, particularly question # 4.

Question # 4 was one of those questions that you anticipate like you anticipate the guillotine. When it finally came, I panicked. After bonking my head several times against the table, it occurred to me that if I was

planning on passing this test at all I needed to get this question. The thought that had been creeping in the back of my mind since I set my eyes on question # 4 saw its opportunity and popped in the front of my mind to say "hi" and "let's cheat." This began a large debate inside of my head which took up a great deal of time before they all finally agreed that cheating would be immoral and I took out a piece of paper and began writing the note to Carol explaining that the banana/pickle pie she brought in was delicious, and could you please give me the answer to number 4?

I did of course regret this the rest of the day, and flunked the next two tests I had in Latin and science due to a severe case of guilt.

division by irrationality

M.H. Leung

I kissed her softly, and she held me more tightly. My lower lip trembled, and my nostrils quivered as a lone tear rolled down my cheek into her soft, autumn hair. I clutched her shoulders as tightly as I could, both of us knowing the instant we let go, our dream would abruptly end... I tried to remember our time together; the countless hours we've read poetry, musing over the meaning of life and the universe, rooftop picnics in the soft moonlight, the sex... I suddenly realized how

vastly different my life would be without her, for I had not before seen how deeply rooted she was in my life, to the point that I would miss simply cooking our meals together...

Although my heart and blood protested, I knew it was time. I squeezed her a last time. She kissed me, eliciting one more tear. I put on my hat, wiped my eye, and walked, not looking back, out of my home of six years. To the War.



Experimenting With Linguistic Steroids

Malka Older

I can still remember before it happened. I carved my English essays on the floor of the prison with a chisel and hammer. Even then I thought that they were boring. Once in a while I stretched my chains and wrote a little on the wall, but for the most part I was down there with the rest of them, chipping away.

Then, it happened. Don't ask me why, I'm still trying to figure that out myself. It was very sudden; my bonds snapped and then there I was,

F R E E.

T	I'm			
H	not		flying!	
I	only	I'm		
S	free,			L W
			O A	
I		<u>Y not?</u>	O Y	
S			K U	

G	i wrote POETRY on the ceiling	A P
R		T H
E		M E
A	writing!	E R
T	am !	!
	I	E

My English teachers were the first to notice that something strange was going on. They liked neat, orderly essays with five paragraphs, a beginning, middle and end, no sentence fragments, no slang.

Everything had to have a one inch margin.

And everybody had to write on the floor. Oh, and that's another thing. They wouldn't let us start any sentences with And, But, However or even Well. So of course they were the first to notice.

"What on earth are you doing?" asked one nervously. "That wasn't the assignment."

"I'm very sorry." I said, though I wasn't. "I've been experimenting with linguistic steroids."

"Come down at once!" called another teacher, exerting authority. You're being a bad influence on the other kids!"

The other kids didn't even know that they were tied.

(I'm still experiencing the after-effects. These linguistic steroids are healthy and a lot of fun, but you have to learn to control them)

"Now, be reasonable," said the third teacher, "and come down. Sake's alive, just look at that grammar! You'll have ten pages of extra work when you come down, young lady."

I had just realized that I need no longer use the heavy, cumbrous hammer and chisel, but merely trace the letters on the cool rough stone with my fingers, and a line of light that couldn't be blocked out would follow.

"Look at that! A fragment! Haven't we taught you anything!"

The fuss continued for quite some time, but I had better things to do than listen.

The next to notice were the students. First one looked up, then another.

"That's weird." said the first, looking only at my writing and not noticing that I was directly above her head, hovering near the ceiling.

"What are you doing?" asked the second.

"I'm writing." I said, feeling very happy.

"What for?" she asked, with the dull curiosity of those who have nothing else to be interested in.

I couldn't answer, because I wasn't writing just for myself, and I wasn't writing entirely for anyone else, and I hadn't realized until then, hovering easily at a height, how large the prison was, how much I could do up there on the ceiling or even on the walls. But I couldn't even tell what was outside the walls, and as soon as I thought that, the room seemed to close in on me. And I was getting dIZZY.

After a while

I came down. I had to, because at least now I knew what it was like to be free, and you can't break chains that aren't there, so I guess they're sort of useful, and besides I was beginning to get incoherent with all the freedom going to my head (you really do have to be careful with these steroids).

So now

I'm on the floor again. But

(as maybe you can see)

I've made some changes. I won't let them chain me to the wall again, and I won't use the hammer or the chisel any more, and, come to think of it, I usually write on the wall now rather than the floor. I still have to do those moronic English essays and they're harder than ever, but I write other things too. My poems still shine from the ceiling. Maybe someday I'll go back up. AND, BUT, HOWEVER, WELL. Maybe someday I'll break out of the prison

ENTIRELY.

On the Edge

Angela Rowlings

It permeates our lungs,
settles on our skin as dampness creeps through our clothing.
In the darkness, soft and heavy,
the mist shrouds the world beyond.
The earth seems flat,
as if we're about to walk over the edge.
But the edge keeps extending farther and farther
until I wonder if there really is an edge.
A thick separation, the fog comes between us.
So, alone, I travel the mystic path to the edge.
Exhilaration from the freedom of being alone without loneliness,
fear of a stranger hiding behind the veil,
anger because of the confusion and frustration I feel.
These emotions envelope my soul as the fog cloaks my body.

My foot sends a shell sprawling across the pavement;
I pocket the black and blue mussel, still unopened.
Others crunch underfoot as I continue.
All I can see ahead is the path curtained by the fog
until a fluorescent light illuminates the area to the right;
But still, all appears hazy.
I turn my back to the light and stare into the blank air
and the water lapping against boulders below.
I reminisce of a time when the sun warmed me,
the airplanes, boats, and the men gutting fish.
And I was held in gentle arms.

I realize that I am no longer alone in the path.

The lapping rapidly graduates to a furious slapping
as he approaches. We are silent.

Quiet words, then the waves' fury dwindle.

Calm again.

I am lured to the edge of the slippery rocks.

Black, murky water lie below.

Bottomless, oily and icy, yet beautiful, reflective.

I stand on the edge of forever and never.

One step has the power to decide my fate.

I am pulled even closer.

I can feel the timpani roll in my chest

as I realize that just one precarious move-

I retreat from the edge, terrified of falling,

anxious that the one who grips me will lean back too far,
and plummet into the depths below;

fearful, too, that I will accompany him.
Again I am pulled closer.
For an instant I relax in his arms,
feeling their protection.
But the reality then returns.
And I stand on the edge of forever and never.



Untitled

Taliesin Magboo Cahill

During the course of my academic life and up to last summer, I had been served up so many of the most edifying, educational and enlightening experiences that I had been spoiled. Perhaps that is why the highlight of my life thus far has nothing to do with the chalkboard and textbook ideals of a "good" education, but rather with my job as dishwasher last summer at the Burgundy Center for Wildlife Studies camp in Cooper's Cove, West Virginia. Dishwashing? Manual labor compared to reading Nobel prize authors, to hearing Galway play Mozart's flute concerto, to seeing "The Ecstasy of Santa Theresa" in St. Peter's, to musing over the wonders of the western world? Yes, dishwashing. I learned more about unhealthy living conditions than any orphan in a Dickens' novel, and had more experience with mold than the inventor of penicillin. More important, however, I began to learn what work is. From that summer, I started to become educated.

It began when I entered the kitchen which was lit by a single row of fluorescent bulbs the last of which flickered nonstop like a neon sign atop a sleazy hotel. Ants crawled up the faucet and made their home in the dirty dish towels. Fly paper hung like jungle foliage from every shelf. This was my office, my place of business. This was where I spent most the day indoors and not outside enjoying the nature camp that I had come to love as a former camper. I had to wash fifty greasy plates per meal at three square meals a day, clean the mammoth vulcan oven and eat all the twice-cooked lentilburgers that would not fit into the leftovers fridge for there was to be no waste. I had tools and the energy to fuel these tools were my fingers, my hands, my shoulders, my back and my legs since scrubbing over a sink is accomplished standing up.

These duties might seem like a collection of trivial chores, yet I soon realized that these were the most important jobs anyone in

our small community could have. If I did not clean, there would be rats, there would be waste and, of course, a raging cook. I had always thought that the great thinkers were the basis of our society, but there can be no great thoughts until our basic needs are met. In cleaning, I was, on a small, but primary scale, facilitating the genius of others.

I could not be fully inducted into the tribal rituals of dishwashing until I had cleaned the meat cutter. Though it was not a pleasant task for anyone, it was totally repugnant to me, a vegetarian. I think it knew I did not eat meat, and responded by ripping my fingers into shreds. It was that and my chlorine-bleached hands which taught me that not everything in the 90's was ergonomic or user-friendly. Living in an industrialized society, I had forgotten that for the rest of the world there are everyday hardships more severe than eye-strain from a computer. I worked, was tired, and occasionally was scathed and bruised.

This work, this job, this effort at lifting an extremely small burden from my parents' financial load, taught me that to experience life as most people experience it there is nothing to equal the knowledge and reality of hard labor. Much as I have spent long nights struggling with translations of Vergil, nothing can compare with the tedium and frustration that comes from cleaning a griddle. As the smell of burnt bacon wafted from the expanse of hot black metal, the cook told me to "make it shine like the tip of the Chrysler Building." She handed me a big piece of pumice and a canister of vegetable oil and instructed me with one word, "Scrub." No more did I envy those who had lives plush enough to worry about a broken fingernail. They would be just that much more helpless and hopeless when they faced the travails of the real world, or that less sympathetic should they be sufficiently isolated and thus mere voyeurs of the human

condition. No formal, academic education, no matter how expensive, can compensate for learning to be comfortable with pork fat under the fingernails, or the ache that comes with the back and forth motion so trivialized by the word "scrub." Kitchens, not think tanks, are the center, the core, the heart of the world. Revolutions are ultimately based on the abundance or lack of food, and if, as Mao Zedung said, in making an omelet one must break a few eggs, there must also be someone there to sweep up the shells afterwards.

There is much I have learned from going to a good school, from visiting museums, and listening to and playing great music, yet I am serious when I say that dishwashing has taught me more in putting all my other studies into some proper perspective than all of these. Most of the world today is comprised of people who are laborers, not intellectuals who write books nor students who read them. This information I have learned from books, but what an actual laborer is, and how a real laborer feels hearing the morning alarm after what seems but a few moments of sleep, I now am

beginning to find out. Bereft of this knowledge, I could have continued developing into an intellectual frowning down upon the little people who do manual labor, not "important" work. I now understand a little about what real work is, about how dirty, difficult and unrelenting it can be. I am also beginning to comprehend the basic architecture of society having discovered first hand that there are divisions of labor and that the bottom rung is a hard place. Yet, it is the first rung and thus bears the weight.

It has been said, and somewhat cavalierly I now realize, that one's education is not complete until one has, say, read Hamlet. I can now say, with the conviction of a convert, that it is also not complete until one has experienced the feel of chicken bones in bare hands, or until one has felt the utter rapture of knowing that breakfast will not be sticky, syrupy pancakes and all accompanying paraphanalia, but rather the simple, the clean "one-bowlness" of cold cereal.



Untitled

Elizabeth Greenwood

Once upon a time there was a group of women who loved neatness. They were disgusted by the lack of order in the world, so they decided to build a sanctuary where people like themselves could go. They built a neat building and painted it with pastel colors. They filled the building with straight rows of shelves, all the same height, and on the shelves they put books with hundreds of straight lines of typewritten words. They called this sanctuary a library and themselves librarians.

This sanctuary satisfied the librarians for a while, but eventually they got bored with staring at books all day. They decided to let people in, only a few people... after all, people were so messy. They allowed elderly people into the library since they seemed so slow and quiet. Soon, however, the librarians became bored with the elderly people as well. They never took out any books, they just sat there reading newspapers. Finally, one of the nicest librarians suggested that they let children in. She argued that children are small and don't take up too much room. The other librarians were a bit apprehensive, but they decided to try the nicest librarian's idea.

Years passed. The first generation of children who had been let into the library

were all going to Boston Latin by this time. They continued to visit the library (the librarians were a little distraught at this; they hadn't counted on the children actually getting older). The children overran the library. They went everywhere, read every book. This made the librarians insecure... even they hadn't read every book. Now the librarians were worried. They feared that if the children continued to learn and grow at such an alarming rate, they would go off and start a library of their own. The librarians were afraid it would be better than their library. They decided that they would have to force the children away. The librarians came up with a plan to annoy the children so much, they wouldn't want to return. The next day, the librarians put their plan into action. First, they yelled at any student who whispered, walked around looking for a book, even breathed, while the librarians talked loudly among themselves. They ignored students who wanted help, while they followed those who didn't, asking patronizingly, "May I help you?"

Although this plan did not completely drive away the students, it unsettled so many of them that it's still in use today.



Spoon

Katy Kroll

I picked up the spoon
and held it up high
I wiped it off delicately
then looked into it
and let out a sigh

the face-
distorted and weary

the lips-
pale, ghoulish gash

the eyes-
distant and weak

who is this poor lost soul?
Could it be me?
No, the eyes have no life
the lips are too pursed
the face has no meaning
who could this be?

I laid the spoon down
and surreptitiously glanced around
those people were laughing
the lost soul is not here.

I picked up the spoon
and held it up high
I closed my eyes
and a solid tear fell
as I began to cry.

I realized the face
in the spoon was
my own.

Untitled

Lori Gallagher

The coverings of my mind
Slashed and scorched over in time!
Once again the silk screen flies,
Grows, revitalizes, and dies.
A screen that never completely covers,
Over a broken heart it hovers
Shakes and stutters and calls for dead,
Crawls repulsively over my head.
Did it drop, did it die,
Could it all be a colorless lie?
They walk, they crawl, they grab
for his hand,
Stumbling over the minds of the land.
They walk in unison, calling out to
him:
Help us... Help us... Please,
Please, Save us!!!
He sees their cries and feels
their pain;
Is all that suffering only in vain?
They are that chameleons invisible by
choice, colorless by society;
Fading, reducing the Holy Deity.
Broken rubble, silken names
Lost in the endless pursuit of fame.
Once again the silk screen dies,
In their hearts forever it flies.



Herbert

Damian Bartlett

Once upon a time, there was a rabbit prince named Herbert. He was very rich, and very handsome, but he was very sad. Although he lived in the biggest lettuce patch in his kingdom, Herb was still a lonely rabbit.

One day, after a gentle spring rain and a restful nap, Prince Herbert decided to go out from his lettuce patch and into the nearby woods. He felt good about himself and the things around him. He liked the smell of the soil and the sound of the insects in the air. The sun had come out and it warmed his back; well-being filled him entirely.

As he entered a clearing he caught sight of a radiant she-rabbit. It was Cassandra: the rabbit-goddess. She was the most beautiful she-rabbit Herbert had ever seen. He worked up his confidence. He approached Cassandra.

"Hello, Cassandra," he said in his friendliest voice.

"Hello, Herb," she said in hers.

"Are you doing anything Friday night?" he asked nicely.

"Nothing, why?" she responded politely.

"Well, I was wondering if you'd..." he offered coyly.



"No, you flea-bitten, godforsaken pea-brained S.O.B.," she told him candidly.

"Um," quoth he, befuddled.

"Get the hell out of my clearing."

Prince Herbert left, not feeling very princely at all. Once out of the clearing, Herbert began to run. He ran and ran until he could run no longer. He had reached a quiet stream and Herbert lay quietly on its bank. After a short while, Herbert slipped his muzzle into the shallows for a cool drink of water. As he lifted his head from the water, he noticed the handsome rabbit that was his reflection.

"He's not so flea-bitten," observed Herbert, "Why, he is rather good-looking! Perhaps I'm not so bad after all."

Herbert was delighted with himself. He sprang from the stream and joyously resumed his venture.

He spotted yet another clearing and ran determinedly towards it.

He sprang from the underbrush into the warm spring sun and skipped about merrily as happy rabbits do. Herbert was promptly picked off by a hunter's rifle as careless rabbits are.

He made a princely stew.

Sonnet 23

Melissa Edwards

What is life if times not sometimes wasted?
 Love naively thrown away on a few.
 If forbidden escapades not hasted,
 or some childhood friends lost to make some new?
 What is joy if not to deplete sorrow?
 What's a heart for but to mend when broken?
 What are objects but to lend or borrow?
 What are pursuits but clear dreams awoken?
 What are mistakes but lessons in disguise?
 and fear but an ignorance of the mind,
 or weight and height, but a matter of size;
 or love, just a feeling to be defined.
 Yet life within complete entireness
 is a source of awaiting happiness.

Elegy for Lewis Caroll

Damian G. Bartlett

Led by kind vermin and tinklings of fairies,
 As seen through a fevered mind's eye,
 Dance with the daffodils, purple and gold,
 Lost in your lubricant sky.

Playing-card politics, leering cats, hat tricks,
 Horseshoes and hand grenades fly,
 In checkerboard palisades, bursting with
 everglades,
 Lost in your lubricant sky.

Soft-hearted sadists, malicious philanthropists
 Toast you with love in their eye,
 Longing for fairy tale, wishing for fantasy,
 Lost in your lubricant sky.

Spring clocks and opium, lizards and royalty,
 Waxworks and pharmacy cry,
 For your warm lack of sanity, imagined sobriety
 - All lost -
 Lost in your lubricant sky.

Red Shoes

Elizabeth Glater

A little girl sat on the window ledge of the school dangling her feet. The other children climbed the jungle gym, slid down the slide, sat on the swings pumping their legs, and chased each other around the shed; the girl sat still. The children wore white Velcro sneakers, some old and gray, others new and white; the girl's shoes were a dusty red and had heavy soles. The playground echoed with shouts and laughter; the girl talked quietly to the teacher. The teacher wanted to help the little girl make friends, but didn't know what to do. She liked the girl.

One day the teacher told the girl to go and play with the other children. The girl was surprised, hurt and bewildered, but she did not tell the teacher. She walked over to the swingset with her eyes on the ground. A boy who was "it" in tag ran into her. He didn't say anything and neither did she. But the swingset was perfect. The swings were just the right height above the ground and the seat was comfortable. The girl swung back and forth until another girl told her to get off.

"Only people wearing sneakers can play on the swings," the other girl yelled.

The little girl walked away. She walked to the slide.

But another girl with her hair tied back in the bright red ribbon said, "Only people wearing sneakers can play on the slide today."

The little girl walked away. Somebody tapped her shoulder and she thought it was the teacher, but it wasn't. A little boy yelled, "You're it," and ran away. She began to chase him, but she couldn't run very fast and she couldn't reach anybody to tag them. The other children got bored because nobody was

getting tagged. The clown of the class, who wore suspenders, nominated himself "it" and began to chase the others. The children whooped with joy and the little girl went over and sat in the corner, alone. She sat there until she heard the bell and then she went inside.

The next recess she did not even go over to her usual window ledge to talk to the teacher. The teacher was surprised, hurt and bewildered because she missed the girl and thought that she had lost a friend. The little girl's brown eyes roved over the playground looking for a place to play or just to sit.

There was only one place that she hadn't been yesterday: the wooden shed. The big boys played in, on top of, and around the shed. It was a fortress, battle ground, and strategy center. The boys played rough. The girls and some boys thought that they had faces like those on the most wanted posters that hung on the wall in the post office. Some of them even spat.

The little girl walked with sturdy steps toward the shed with her eyes on the ground. She stood at the outskirts of the rowdy group for a moment and then, because nobody told her to go away, she walked closer to the shed. All the boys were too busy fighting and shouting to notice her, except the chunky boy, wearing a black patch over one eye, who stood on top of the shed. He was the leader and he ignored her.

The little girl started to climb up to the top of the shed and she grabbed the nearest person's hand to help hoist herself up. It was the leader's hand - she had done something



that no one else had ever dared to do before. He helped her up and he did not smile, but did not snarl either. That was all that happened the first day.

Every day the little girl climbed up on to the shed. She gave him advice on strategy and he escorted her through the enemy when he made field visits. He became gentle when he was around her, but when anybody teased him about her, he fought back hard.

The teacher did not know how and why this came to be, but she took advantage of it. One day when the children were going on a field trip, she told Tom and Stacey to be partners and to lead the line. Tom behaved better than he ever had before. He didn't break out of line. He didn't jump in puddles. He didn't talk back to the teacher. Tom and Stacey talked about what they passed by, what they were going to see, and when their birthdays were. Tom told Stacey that he liked her shoes and from then on she always walked with pride. They decided that when they grew up they were going to have ten boys and ten girls. They compromised because Tom wanted all boys and Stacey wanted all girls. They told their parents and their parents laughed. Parents always laugh at serious things.

When they weren't on field trips and they weren't planning their family, they played with the other boys in the playground on the shed. The boys played just as tough as ever, but now they were defending a queen. Whenever it got too tough, Stacey told Tom and Tom told the boys, and the boys stopped.

The teacher marvelled and wished that Stacey wouldn't leave next year so that she could tame the bully of the forthcoming class. But Stacey had to leave so that she could go to first grade. Stacey's mother came to pick her up from kindergarten for the last time. Stacey shook Tom's hand good-bye, reached up to her mother's hand, and left.

The little girl had new school friends with whom she talked, giggled, and played.

She had many friends now because she always walked with her chin up and because she never looked at her shoes; no one else did either. Every time she saw some boys fighting at recess, she thought about Tom, but she never told them to stop. She wasn't afraid of them and the other girls respected her even more.

Tom was different. He did not have many friends, but he never hurt anybody anymore. When he got angry, he remembered Stacey's voice and he sat on his fists. Later when he took karate and self-defense, he never lost control like the other students, and he was the most obedient of them all.

Now if they saw each other on the street, they smiled at each other shyly, but they did not speak to each other. Later they never quite forgot each other. Although the friendship was gone, it left an imprint on each of them.



My Love is Like a River

Melissa Edwards

My Love is Like a River

allowing all to take as
much as they wish
my love is like a River
silently forgotten
in the mist.

My love is like a River

sometimes overcome
with violent storms
my love is like a River
knows no limits, shapes
or form.

My love is like a River

deep, passionate yet
Subtly comforting
my love is like a River
a yearning to return
once you're been in.

My love like a River

does not purposely
hurt or lie
my love is like a River
as long as it rains
will never go dry.

Untitled

Jean Bernier

I never knew someone so
attractive as you existed in this world!

Little did I know I could love
someone like you.

Your beauty takes my breath away.
You're so elegant, so stunning, so caring. I love
you.

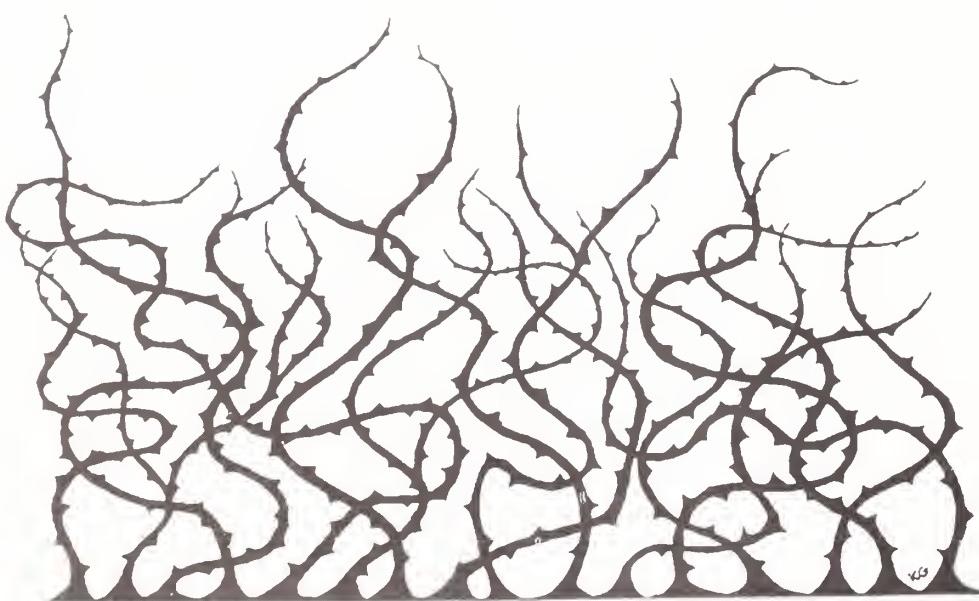
I could just picture us laughing
together hoping that it will never end.

I could see you walking on the beach,
waves following your every move as if...
as if they were worshipping you.

Of all the goddesses, no one compares
to you.

If I could have one wish I would
wish you felt the same way about me.

I love you, I need you, and I love
you always.



incarnation

Sylvia Allen

So many times I have been the rose on the sidewalk. So many times dropped and squashed and torn and scattered and neglected, overlooked... when no one took the time, no one had the courage, to walk outside the lines! When no one cared enough to care.

So many times the rose on the sidewalk - Hurt, Shattered, Broken, Destroyed are shallow words that cannot begin to touch the feeling.

Still...from that same rose I grow strong, I draw hope, from that same rose I am strong, I have hope, from the same rose,

through that same rose...
in that same rose...

in Carnation, Beauty does not die...
Even when it is only a rose on a sidewalk.

Unwithered Age: ode to old valleys revisited

Lee Godfrey Stewart

The Passion we hold need never die
 And though need it rest
 As sleep we need from day to night
 The songs of youth are sung still strong with age
 And greater with the knowledge
 That experience has brought

Certainly fear evokes a violent run
 But look at what you're saying
 Do not enchanted hearts explode
 To find a living love

Young man you may not have seemed in your world
 At twenty eight an elder
 But why should passion ever be a haunt
 When just it is in provoking

You seem to be so alive in the thoughts you bear
 That I mourn your unfortunate ignorance
 How can pleasure be a "sobered" thing
 If maturity steals your ecstasies away



I Used to Race the Wind

Malka Older

I used to race the wind,
 And it was always far ahead,
 Rippling the tips of the grass,
 And darting around skirts and hair.
 Narrow through the chain-link fences,
 Broad across the open fields,
 As I followed behind,
 My fat baby feet thumping down the narrow road.
 But sometimes if the wind
 Stopped too long to play and dance,
 I, steadily plodding through the dust,
 Would pass the finish line of my front door,
 And be pronounced the winner.
 Now that I am older I race time,
 I hurry ahead with my projects and papers,
 Sometimes off course, but always much faster
 Than time that follows steadily behind.
 Second after second.
 Unless I wait too long,
 Sing in the shadows,
 And time reaches the deadline first.

Mirror Generations

Norma C. Acebedo-Rey

I was 54 when I returned to Ypacarai Lake in Paraguay. I walked to the corner of the water where there were no hotels, no ferries, no people talking, leaving, coming. I sat on the sand with my arms curled around my knees and listened to the silence of the water, remembering. I had been there many years before with my grandmother. I could remember how she stood at the edge of the water with her hands folded, her skirt clinging to her calves, her stare clinging to the mountains far out of our reach...

My grandmother was the love of a man who built churches, granddaughter of a woman who never cried. I could remember how she'd squint her eyes, fanning away the ashes from a small charcoal fire in the kitchen, sparks rising, crackling, twirling down, dying out. She used to sit under the tree in her yard and talk and laugh and smile and talk. Circles of sun would spill through the spaces between the tree leaves and slowly slide across her rippled forehead, cheek, chin... I could remember her white clay house and the stories she told about my grandfather in the Chaco War against Bolivia. 1933. She would smile

when she talked about how bats would come to eat the nispero fruit from her tree when the sky turned purple, how her father used to clip half-opened peanut shells on her baby girl's ears, how my grandfather used to whistle Buenos Aires tangos while he shined his shoes before he went to Mass, how... And shaking her head in remembrance, the square light in her eyes would fall to the red dirt under her sandals, and she'd adjust her stockings. She had coffee eyes and every November she turned 80 with a wooden rosary in her hands, 81, 82,...

I could only see a few lights ahead in the hotel windows and on the slow, singing ferries. I was standing alone, staring at the mountains that hadn't yet become sky with the descent of the sun...

I was still listening to that voice under the tree.

...And walking away from the silence of the sleeping water, I could hear the echo of her coughing laughter, and I said hello again in my goodbyes.



Ruthy

Angela Rowlings

Mom walked me to the bend in the road, and tightened the bow on the kerchief on my head. (I was too grown up to wear a hat.)

"Can you walk me a little further?" I implored.

"You know the way," she said, then kissed my forehead and turned back to my house.

I passed the Crowleys' pink house, Matt and Gabe's, Carol's, the one with the bright lawn, the green one with the pigeon coop, and the enormous white one that looked as if rich people lived there because they had so many cars.

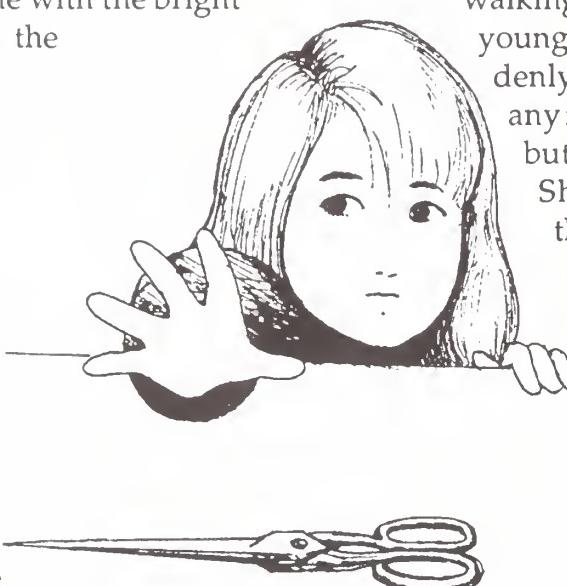
Next to that big white house was Ruthy's. A brown one-story with a smoke-stained gutter from when her younger brother had accidentally set the house on fire, it stood apart from all the neighbor's well-kept properties. The lawn was crab grass, small bushes, garbage, weeds, and blue wild flowers with thick, seemingly indestructible stalks rather than stems.

I mounted the crumbling steps apprehensively, and banged timidly on the door which was smeared with mud and grunge. When Ruthy appeared at the door, she did not invite me in while she laced up her sneakers. She never invited me in. Through the filmy Plexiglas I could see the colors of the television blaring and illuminating the living room which was shrouded by the tattered shades.

When she finally came outside, we walked to the little field toward the end of my street. Ruthy had stolen her mother's scissors so we could cut branches from the pussy willow tree. We marveled at how soft they were, and we each broke off a few of the grey

"fuzzies" to keep in our pockets for whenever we wanted to feel their silky plushness.

Ruthy's dark blonde hair hung in wispy strings in her face, her dimpled smile revealed spaces where baby teeth had fallen out, and her blue eyes always tried to conceal an inner sadness.



One November day we were walking down the street with her younger brother when she suddenly stopped and refused to go any further. I pleaded with her, but she said she was frozen. She stood so still that I thought she was actually frozen to the spot. I pushed her gently, to test if this was so. She cried, "You don't know what it's like to be freezing cold! You have a warm jacket!" Then she turned and ran home, with her following close behind. Stupefied, hurt, confused, angry, I stood there for a minute to think about what she had just said. But all I understood was that she was "poor."

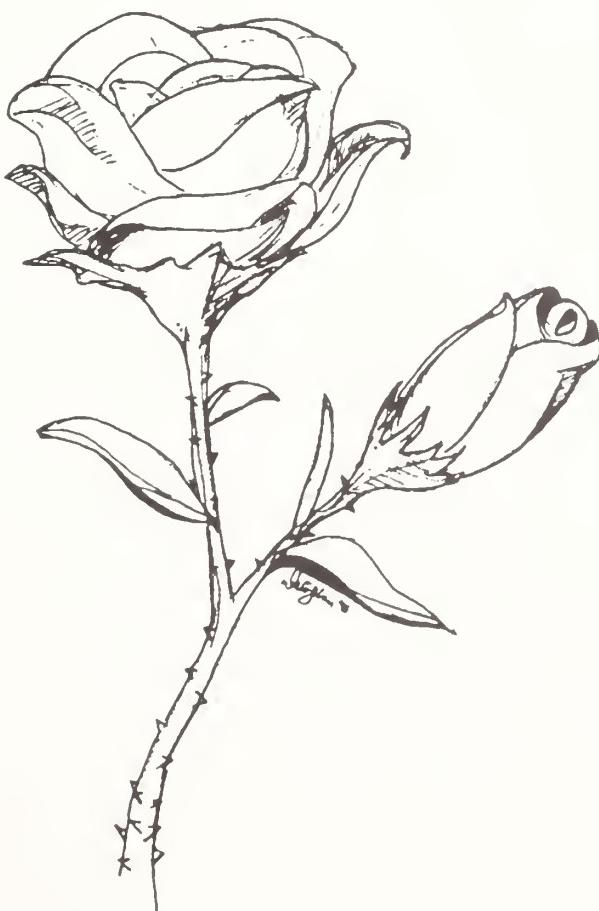
Ruthy was the only person I'd ever met who was on welfare. She was the only person I'd ever met whose parents were divorced, whose brother used drugs, whose mother left her kids at home without a baby-sitter... except for the time Ruthy and her two younger brothers spent the night at my house because her mother forgot to pick them up until seven the next morning. Her life was so different than mine.

When I remember the times I spent with Ruthy, I remember the sky as being grey. I can't remember the sun ever being out, except once when one of my neighbors yelled at

bors did not like Ruthy. She cowered beside my house with the hope that they wouldn't see her and find fault with something she had done. I loved her because she was unique, daring, and outspoken.

I don't remember what year she was put into a foster home. It was when I was in the second or third grade. I didn't even know where she was until I woke up to an announcement on the radio one morning. Her baby brother had suffocated in a fire at the house where they were staying. . . behind a bureau with a cat. Then my mother explained that her mother couldn't take care of her anymore so she had to live with a different family. I haven't seen her since, and I lost the one photograph I had of her.

The pussy willow tree died not long after she left.



Party in The Garden

Kelly O'Rourke

From buttercup dreams
Morning glories awake;
Violets go tapping
But no sound they make.

Lilacs kiss tulips,
Daisies hug lilies;
Dandelion snowstorms
Have never been chilly.

Bluebells start ringing,
Petunias prance;
Sunflowers singing
While daffodils dance.

And then...all is silent
As all turn to stare
At the beautiful rose:
So graceful, so fair.

Her roots step so lightly
With each gentle pace;
She blushes so slightly,
Displaying her grace.

The flowers, the flowers-
They play in the night;
Our evening's their noon
In the gleaming moonlight.

And when the sun rises,
They jump in their beds;
Soft wind lullabies
And they're nodding their heads.

And when you approach
Try and listen, Dear, please,
Hear their whispering snores
Rise and fall on the breeze.

Train

Anonymous

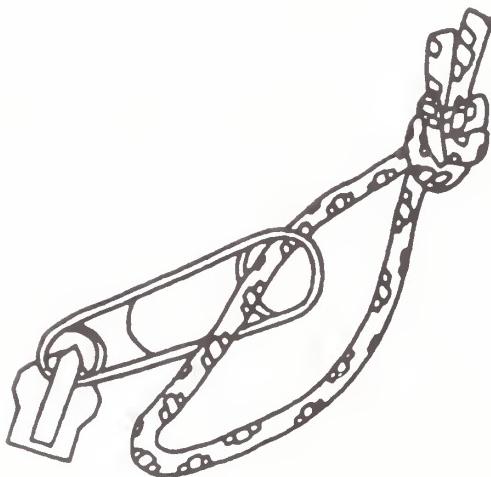
I came of age on the train today. I was alone for the first time in months, but I did not feel lonely. My thoughts occupied me so much that I could hardly keep up with all of them.

I sat on the worn orange seat, facing the empty conductor's booth that would be full if the train were headed home, by the window with my feet up on the seat in front of me. My back was towards what was coming; my mind focused on what had gone.

I thought about leaving my friends behind at the corner drug store and fountain. I thought about the harsh booming sound that the door made when I violently pushed it open so I could run to catch the train. I thought about the repeated screams of a woman whom I heard before and long after I boarded my train. I thought about thinking about writing a letter to a friend who I am not sure is really a friend. I thought about stroking the soft hair on my dearest friend's head with one hand while I held his blindly searching hand with the other. I thought

about large groups of people being happy together. I thought about chocolate chip cookies and cars the size of my house. I thought about devotion and dedication and self-sacrifice and selflessness. I thought about being sad or being lonely or being ungrateful. I thought about my feeling false and inadequate. I thought about wanting someone to know me better than I know myself. I thought about perfection. I thought about escape. I thought about being old and being young and wanting to be free from care and worry. I thought about guilt. I thought about a stunt biker riding on the front wheel of his dirt bike. I thought about snow and freezing and jackets and fire. I thought about dying and how dying defined everything. I thought about not being understood. I thought about being alone again. I thought about peace.

The train turned the corner into the dark tunnel, dimly lit by fluorescent lights, every other one of which was broken. In my mind I ran through these tunnels and rejoiced in the fleeting darkness.



We Weren't So Different

Melissa Edwards

Running around in circles,
wondering your true feelings of me,
Losing my mind, thinking I was never
the child you wanted me to be,
Trying to get a peace of mind
Only coming up short
In whatever there was to find,
I knew time would catch up
with us someday
But I didn't know how; with you
I never knew what to say.
I guess we weren't so different;
After all
We both had to learn to
stand and fall.
No one's perfect; there are problems
we all go through.
We weren't so different;
I'm only a part of you.
I thought we'd never break
the boundaries,
so much lost time and bad memories.
I regret all those harsh words
wishing I could mend the past;
You were in the slow lane,
I was moving too fast.
Now I've stepped back
and guess what I should find-
my father... Daddy I hope
we still have time.



Untitled

Malka Older

To be a tree
What greater glory is there
but to
Arch into the sky
a semi-sphere
Of life, outspread
interconnecting
Dark limbs reaving up into
the pale blue morning?
But what a terror, to
be always reaching
Up, out, never meeting
another object,
The world to be groped
blindly out
Alone, dark, shivering
in the cold blue morning!

The Snowflake

Kimberly Giunta

a shaved bit of ice
floating through the dark sky
a crystalline piece of beauty
etched against the blackness of my eye
fell on my lashes
and slipped into my heart
unique pure and bright
from the very start
different innocent and light
to its melting end
i love this bit of snow
and my heart does ascend

Ghosts of Christmas Past

Rebecca Morrison

Christmas time is when I feel the change most strongly. My head, resting against my pillow on Christmas Eve, is inundated with memories that emphasize the sharp contrasts, now that sugarplums no longer dance there. The lights that form a tangled, sinuous track around the evergreen seem constantly on the verge of going out. I am careful not to disturb a single bulb and cause unneeded stress by upsetting this fragile state of electrical equilibrium. And I admit that I rather hope it doesn't snow; my car has not been winterized.

Christmas was not always this way. There was a time when my young mind could not conceive the amount of time and effort required to fulfill a child's Yuletide wishes. I did not care to know. If ever my curiosity had been stirred, I could assure myself that every task was "tied up" as easily as a silk ribbon on a package, and by the mitten-covered hands of a plump and white-bearded superhuman, no less. Christmas eve was an entrancing delight. Adults and children alike seemed intoxicated with pleasure and anticipation. (I sensed no connection between the behavior of the "grown-ups" and the Christmas cocktails that they held in their hands.) Christmas morning was a glorious celebration, gifts and food abounding. It relieved the aching anticipation that extended throughout the sleepless night hours, beginning when I was told to go to bed, (or else drive away the elves who

would soon arrive, tiny arms full of presents).

I sleep on Christmas Eve now. I must; I am tired after spending the late-night hours assembling bicycles and match-box car gas stations for my three year old cousin who now lives with me. There is nary an elf to help. I sense my mother's stress and exhaustion as she washes the dinner dishes. I know that she wishes my sister could have made it home from college. The empty hook on the mantle, once used to hang my father's stocking, has served as a painful Christmas time reminder since his death. Before going to my room, I turn and look at the decorations, and the tree looks very small in the corner.

On Christmas morning, the red-and-tags hold teenage necessities, not childhood fantasies. I pull open the tissue paper to find a paperback copy of "College Admission: Cracking the System." I smile appreciatively at my mother, partly because I hadn't want to spend my own \$12.95 on this book that only she is sure will be of help. I stop opening for a moment and look at my little cousin, his eyes glazed over with astonishment and joy as he finally notices his silver two-wheeler in the corner. I watch him in all his excitement and cast knowing smiles at my mother and my aunt, the only other members of my household. I realize that I am living in what was once but is certainly no longer the typical American family, and I am no longer the child.



Victims of the Holocaust

Rebecca Amelia Morrison

Wandering the landscape,
There's nothing much too see;
But in the wind, I hope you still
Can hear my desperate plea:
Help me,
They hurt me,
Don't turn and don't desert me,
For, if you are at all like me,
They'd have hurt you too.

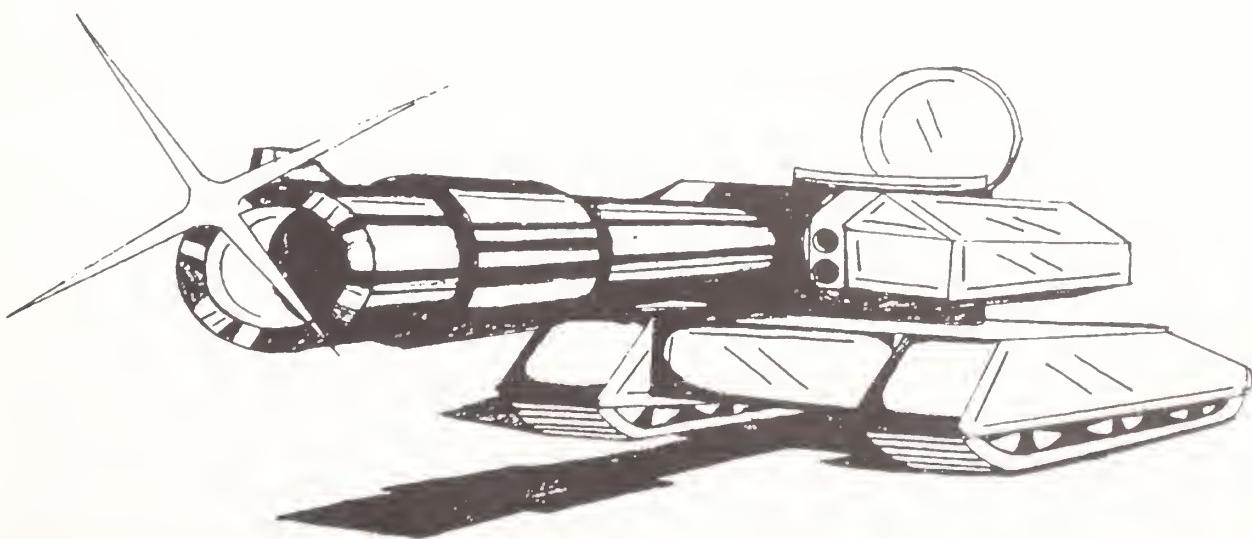
The air is crisp and fresh:
The season's soft, sweet breath,
Nothing like the gas that filled our brains,
And caused our death.
Choking,
Suffocating,
And we are only waiting,
Waiting for death to come and take
Our souls out of this chamber.

In the morning sunshine
You can see the children play
Not the tiny tortured souls
Of an earlier day
Whining,
Screaming,

Not sleeping and not dreaming;
Never would they live to see
The lives they might have known.

The flowers bloom profusely
Watered by our tears
Shed in painful terror
As we agonized for years
Fearing,
Crying,
We watched our children dying
Consoled by the thought
That we would soon die, too.

In the evening shadows
You may stop and hear our cries.
You see our footprints on the ground,
Our faces on the sky
Remember,
Don 't forget me
If I fade away, don't let me.
The memory of our massacre
Should live forever
more.



The Sox

Kathleen Rana

Late into the night the announcer's voice crackled aver a frequency that just couldn't be attained no matter how much the dial was adjusted. The sound rose from her apartment, my basement, and gave play-by-plays of the Sox's fragile standing. Deep within the earth she sat, eighty-eight years old, one of the last left who was alive when they won in 1918. She always listened and always would. The Sox were the one constant throughout the most turbulent years: War, Prohibition, Depression, War, Baby Boom, War, Kennedy, War, Hippies, Watergate, Disco, War. She had lived it all with the only man she ever loved: a sick man. She struggled to keep him walking. When those efforts failed she struggled to keep him free from pain. Too many aspirin foiled that attempt and organs eroded. Finally she struggled to keep him breathing, but that too was despair waiting like Jack-in-his-broken-box to spring up when her back was turned. Her husband passed; she did not. The Sox struggled through another season.

She had three daughters: a fraud, a fighter, and a friend. Her first, our fraud, was a meticulous child. She was the epitome of perfection. Try to find her flaw. It's well hidden below miles of confidence. Eventually one will see she cannot cope with the reality of truth. If her son is hurt in a fight, he didn't instigate it. If her husband has terminal cancer, he's recovering. She keeps her front row season tickets behind the first baseline though she has to sell most of them to maintain her standing as a season ticket holder. When she got her claws into those tickets the money was flowing, but when the money stopped she could not accept defeat. She chose to grapple for those seats as a sign of her invincibility. There may be no food on the table, but by God come Saturday those seats were hers to be cramped into for three hours.

The second child, our fighter, was born with such animosity for family that the Sox

were never an admitted pleasure. The genetics involved seemed to have passed her by, but on close inspection one could see that she had to push them away. True rejection isn't possible. Her disgruntled spirit remained. She always wandered, so her two boys were reared by her mother. The woman brought them up right. They stuck to the Sox like hair to a static brush on a dry winter's day. Sadly, the boys felt the tension. They longed to be with their mother, but she didn't seem to have much use far them. They grew up clinging to the one thing they found solace in: the Sox. They'd always be there even if their own mother strayed.

The third and youngest child, our friend, is a true pacifist. When she heard the fighter go at it with her father, she locked herself in rooms and blocked her ears to escape the torment. Many would have complained or entered the arguments, but she remained silent. She sat in the bleachers with her mother, content to be in a park with people who loved the game as much as she did. She never talked of the politics of the sport. She just enjoyed the romantic smells of the peanuts, fresh cut grass, and the urine splattered bathrooms. This was her life: true, honest, real. She never shunned dirt; it was a fact of life. She never picked fights; hostility was a sickness of humanity. She always waited to find the good in a person and if she discovered that goodness was lost forever she accepted it and took the loss. This woman was not into self-delusion. She was a true, solid individual whose only fault lay in her tolerance of pain. She could touch the fire once and learn a lesson, but if it won her confidence again she'd stick her hand right back in. After 1986 her relationship with the Sox seemed shaky, but they had a few good seasons afterward and everyone deserves a second chance, don't they?

The radio switch flips off. The Sox win 6-4 over the Yankees. A sweet victory: New

York deserves to lose. She waddles into the bathroom. She has to soak her teeth, brush away the psoriasis, urinate. Off to bed at 10:42 p.m. She can read the numbers clearly; her youngest gave her a big, digital clock last Christmas to aid her failing eyes. She turns out the lights in her apartment, my basement, that her youngest gave her twenty years ago. A deep sigh is followed by a little confusion about where she is. Ah yes, home safe. She takes out her rosary and says ten Hail Marys for the fraud who has been cursed with a sick husband and a vulnerable boy. She says ten more Hail Marys for the fighter and her two poor boys that haven't yet been able to find the mothering they need with past wives and

present girlfriends. The next prayers go to our friend and her troubled soul, but there is not too much concern because the friend will always survive, after all she has a husband and two young girls to look after her. A blessing is sent to those two girls, the elder being part fraud, part fighter, and part friend. The younger, a little lost, a little stubborn, but sharp enough that she needs a few prayers to sustain her. The last ten Hail Marys go to the team: a thought to the Yawkeys, some inspiration to Butch, and a last request for the win. When the win comes, her eternal sleep will begin; to live and die with the Red Sox: one woman's journey.



Flop

Daniel Older

While most gods live up in the lavishly furnished heavens, and spend their days frolicking and gambling in the clouds, Flop, the god of politicians and naked mole rats, makes his domain in a small subterranean cave, and lives with his servants his wives, and his 8,900,78.5 children. Flop, who was sent to live underground by Zeus because he made obnoxious noises at the dinner table, enjoys riding around in his naked mole rat chariot, and checking up on elections around the world.

Flop's powers were granted to him by Loop, goddess of sympathy, and were taken away by Zeus, leaving Flop virtually powerless. His only powers are the ability to produce mass millions of naked mole rats and politicians through his navel, and to whistle out of his right ear. He does, however, have a great ability to dig, and gather popularity

through dishonesty. Flop has twice tried to take his powers back from Zeus, but both times they have refused to go.

Moooo, along with all the other gods, is Flop's main adversary. Moooo is the goddess of farmers and naked-moleraticides. She constantly throws her evil potions in Flop's domain, seriously decreasing the population of naked mole rats. Moooo also showers her evil concoctions upon political conventions across the world, seriously decreasing the population of politicians. Moooo was commended by all (except, of course Flop) for her admirable deeds of valor.

In a world filled with hatred and greed, Flop valiantly puts the burden upon his own shoulders of making the world a kinder and gentler world for naked mole rats and politicians alike.

Optima Dies...Prima Fugit

Ivee Wong

I was very much a tomboy then, much to my mother's dismay, and I used to tag along with my big brother and his friends. Perhaps they accepted me out of respect for my big brother, or because of their general human kindness, or perhaps I was just such a witty conversationalist. I don't know. Somehow it seemed I always ended up cleaning "our" clubhouse and feeding "our" pets and I virtually disappeared whenever any pretty girls came around. I was always instructed to hide myself. When I refused, various stories were fabricated on the length of my remaining life. The girls thought they were such sensitive souls for granting a dying little girl her last wish to join their clubhouse. (Obviously they were not endowed with intelligence).

Everyday, as soon as possible, we would make a long treacherous trek to the dark canopy of the jungle where the sun never shined, exotic birds chirped incessantly, and mythical beasts were rumored to inhabit. Okay, so it was just a hop across the street, it never actually got dark, ugly black crows were as exotic as they came, and the closest thing to a mythical beast was a pathetic green garter snake; but there were some toads with nasty dispositions and tall blades of grass that could render the most heart-wrenching cuts.

I was Kimba, the fiercest female lion cub; my brother was Tamiwa, King of the jungle; Mohammad was Pakan, the last surviving saber-tooth tiger; Rajih was a metamorphic butterfly Sumatran tiger; and Roy (the most unimaginative member of our group) was ... scared. By the end of the year, he had finally decided on being a hideous pink pig. He never knew how close to the truth he had come.

We'd stalk through the lush jungle searching for unsuspecting prey. Pouncing on them, we were always successful with the element of surprise on our side. These trophies were immediately embalmed and displayed. We placed our prized butterflies into

jelly jars and drowned them. We were filled with ideas of mounting these delicate treasures onto cardboard and displaying them in glass-protected frames. We decided to mass produce these framed butterflies and sell them. We were confident that they would be in popular demand and would subsequently make us the youngest billionaires in the Guinness Book of World Records. However, our plans were soon diminished when it occurred to us that our stunning, vividly patterned and colored treasures took on an even, dingy shade of grey. Apparently the water had washed out all the color grains on their wings and along with it all our prospects of instant wealth and fame.

Come the monsoon season, I had gained a new respect and standing in the group. I was promoted to the rank of official tadpole collector. Brimming with pride, I accepted my new position. I sneaked out of the house every day at exactly 4:35 P.M. and entered the field. I hated those excursions. I always had to bypass an old abandoned car, filled with thoughts of an ax-murderer lurking inside. (My mother's paranoia influenced me greatly when I was younger.) The next obstacle was the ever-increasing swarm of mosquitoes that always left me with big red itchy bumps and at least one stray stuck in my left ear. And finally my destination:

MILLIONS and MILLIONS of newly-hatched tadpoles just waiting to be grabbed by a pair of pudgy little hands and stuffed into a small plastic bag. I ate one once. My father had told me about sushi and it sounded so delectable. I figured they looked like fish so it was all right. My mouth watered at the very thought of one of those slippery smooth "sushies." I didn't like it.

One year, Mohammad had decided (ever so nonchalantly) to build a bonfire on the bordering strip of land in front of the field that was part of his family's property. No one had thought anything of it since Mohammad had always had harmless pyromaniacal tendencies.

cies. He wasn't a novice at building fires and we, as his closest friends (and closest friends' sister), subsequently became quite adept with fire. When I was five years old, I had received a magnifying glass for my birthday having absolutely no idea of what I was supposed to do with it, I spent hours staring at the seemingly inane piece of plastic. Mohammad showed me the wonder of creating fire with the magnifying glass to cremate small creatures. He promised me that he would give me his lighter when I "grew as ancient and wise" as his ripe old age of seven. I suppose he saw the look of disappointment that crossed my face at the thought of having to wait for such an eternity, for the next morning I found his lighter lying on my front gate. He swore to me that it wasn't

his lighter because his lighter had a little black notch at the upper left corner and the one that I had "found" did not possess such a disfigurement. For months I tried vehemently to prove that the lighter had belonged to him and he denied it just as vehemently. I wonder if he ever regretted giving the lighter to me in the first place.

We convened that night of the bonfire. Mohammad told us that every fire had to be carefully constructed with a gentle touch and a large dose of reverence. He explained to us that everyone who had ever died in a fire would resurface whenever any fires were made, hoping to avenge their deaths and rest their tortured souls. We whooped and hollered around the bonfire and threw in any snails



Optima Dies...Prima Fugit

unfortunate enough to cross our paths. After our escapade Mohammad extinguished the fire and threw the ashes into the field. (It seems odd, to think about it now, that we had thought of naming every snail and ant we incinerated but the field had stayed simply as "the field.") Unfortunately the ashes decided to use their dying strength to set the already sun-parched grass into a torrid blaze of fire. There was a small cement house in the corner of the field that held all the electrical wiring that sent electricity to the houses in a three-mile vicinity. The sirens of fire-engines whined through the neighborhood. Curious faces and their bodies occupied every space on the street watching the waves of fire rise heavenwards. Children began to shout with excitement. Not connecting the fire to our bonfire, we shouted just as excitedly as the other children. We held our hands on our heads as a desperate attempt to shield the fire away from our faces. We were in no danger of getting scorched; we were just afraid that the fire would spread to the cement house and burn the wires subsequently exploding every house in the neighborhood into a cloud of fire, severed houses, and human body parts. My father had been a high-ranking technician for the government's electrical systems. At the first sign of the fire, he had ordered the systems in the house to be shut off. Mohammad's father was the chief of the fire department. Two houses down was yet another father who held a high position and

experience in emergency medical services. Nevertheless it never occurred to us that we were far from being in any danger; We were afraid for our lives.

However the excitement soon died down with the fire and the field grew back into its full glory. The birds resumed their incessant chirping, the snails commenced their noiseless chatter, the toads recroaked their noble heritage, and the tadpoles (what was left of them) returned to their mindless existence. It seemed as though the fire had never happened. Our escapades began again and we never connected ourselves as part of the cause of the fire.

We spent many days there together until our group began to disperse. Mohammad "grew up" on us when a young lady caught his eye, Rajih and his family moved to Sarawak, my brother began to take on airs since he was no longer a baby fourth grader anymore, I was doomed to a whole year of third grade, and Roy was ... still scared.

A few years ago, I returned to Malaysia and I found that my beloved field was now the Petaling Jaya Secondary School. My life-teeming pond became the designated area for the garbage. I had always known that the original intent for that field was for a school, but my everything-around-the-world-revolves-around-me philosophy did not prepare me for the destruction of my "optima dies."



A Celebration of Fall

Hilary Krieger

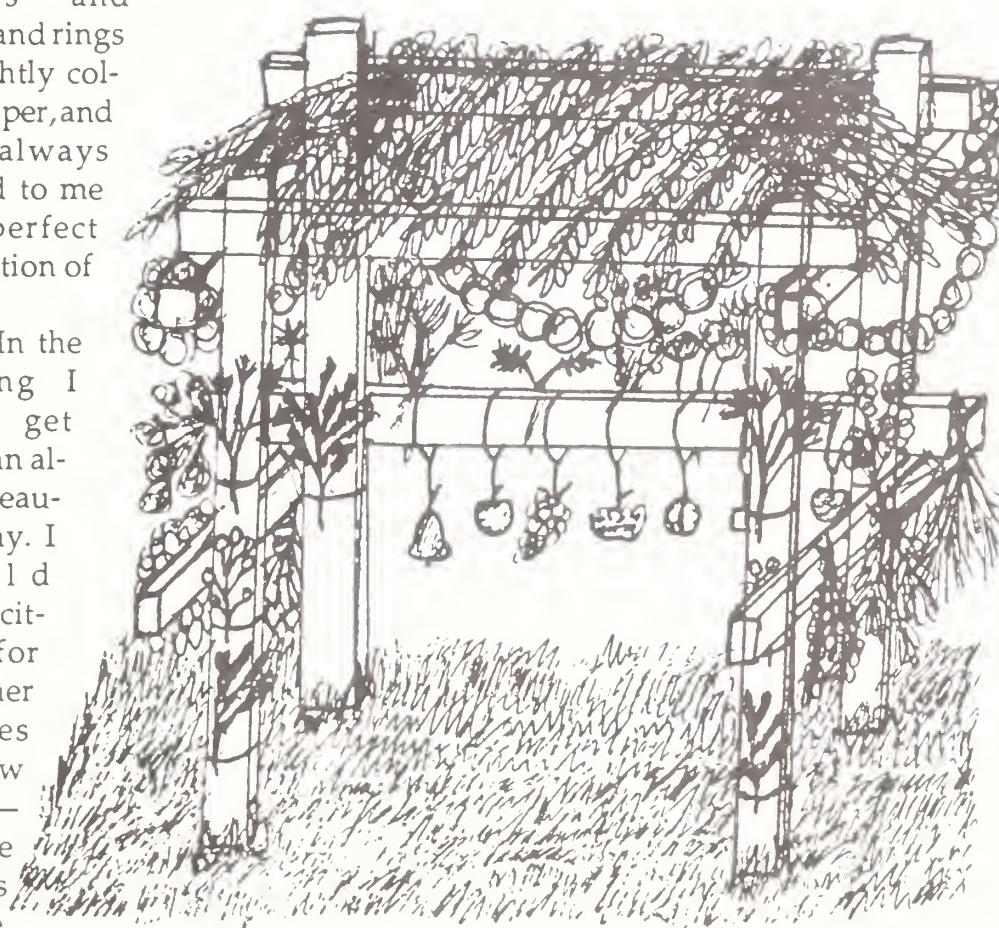
Beautiful flowers, fruits, colors. A standing booth of wood, verdure, and life. Autumn yellow, pumpkin orange, spring green, sunset violet. A celebration of the harvest a sukka. It is one of the lesser known Jewish holidays that has been a favorite of mine since I was a little girl. It is a ceremony that commemorates the harvest by building a booth out of wood, and decorating it with flowers and plants and rings of brightly colored paper, and has always seemed to me the perfect celebration of fall.

In the morning I would get up on an always beautiful day. I would wait excitedly for the other families to show up — people always made every-

thing more festive. Once they had arrived, I would rush outside to make sure I hadn't missed anything. The first step was to dig holes in the ground which would hold the four basic posts that supported the sukka. I loved prying the moist dirt out of the earth and the aroma of the rich soil. I would attack the roots and shrink from the worms until four deep circular grooves had been created.

I was too little to help place the posts in the ground, but I eagerly jumped on chairs to nail in the cross-beams. The wood looked fresh and new with its red-painted ends, and the nails shiny and strong. Joining the two together, though, required the aid of a heavy, clunky hammer that my small, pudgy hand could barely grasp. To hit the head of the nail was a problem, not aided by my tentative taps due to a fear of injuring my fingers. After watching this process for a little while, my dad would laughingly take the tools from me and quickly drive the nail into the wood with unbelievably strong blows. Even so, it would still be the nail I had done, my nail, which was even more essential than the scores of others holding together the sukka.

After my nailing was finished, I would hurry into the car where I would be taken by my mother and the other women to a vast field of wildflowers and weeds, which I would gather up in my arms. I always attracted to bright splotches of pink, purple, red, and blue hidden among the common greens, yellows, and browns. The trunk would fill up quickly, so then we would drive back with the smell of



A Celebration of Fall

flowers filling our noses. We would lift the bundles of plants out of the trunk and spread them over the sukka. The hut was now protected by walls of natural flora; open yet enclosed, and beautiful.

I would then go with the other children to make paper chains—multicolored strips of construction paper linked together by tape, staples, and glue. On the floor were piles of bright pieces of paper, and I loved to make patterns with the colors of the chains—rainbow, primary, random. When we had used every last piece of paper we would wrap the chains around our bodies and parade outside, adorned with our work. We never had quite enough to go all the way around the sukka, but it was only a momentary distraction, because next came the fruit-hanging. This was

especially hard to do because it is difficult to tie a string around an apple and have it stay. I would watch the adults struggle with the twine and then gleefully hang up the food.

I liked all of the fruits, but my favorite were the gourds.

They were always totally different and malformed, with green, orange, tan, and black protrusions, the more twisted the better. I would make sure that they were hung in prominent places so everyone would see my beautiful gourds. When they were done, I would stand back and look at my perfect little house of flowers and branches. We would all eat some challah and have some wine, but the real ceremony was over; we had celebrated the fall, the harvest, and sukkus.

Dunkin' Donuts, 3:00 PM

Sherry Eskin

It's not as if we want to be here. We're all in transition, thinking our lonely thoughts over the muzak as we finish our coffee and prepare to travel to our next destination. Yet we all seem to linger, cupping our hands around our styrofoam cups to ward off the cold breeze, smoking cigarettes, reading yesterday's Herald. I'm only here because I have a meeting to go to in a half hour or so, and I have no place else to go. Well, it's a legitimate excuse.

Customers arrive at the cash registers to order wake-up brew from the orange-and-pink guardians behind the counter. They leave briskly, powdered sugar already staining their content fingertips. Yet the environment beyond the stacked coffee cups is anything but content. It almost seems rather despondent, as we sit in our swivel chairs and sulk. One man takes a few napkins from the dispenser and blows his nose. I wince. I feel sorry for all of us, being

here. We're middle class homeless, looking for a place to try to relax before we join the rat race once again. We're not allowed into the executive clubs with their finger sandwiches and quiche, so we must settle for jelly doughnuts instead.

And the world shuffles in and out, the working class Americans on their perpetual coffee break. A family with young, golden children comes in and disturbs the solemn peace. I, the young writer clutching at her cup of caffeine, look on in distaste. Go somewhere else with your coloring books. Go mess around in Chuck E. Cheese.

My doughnut is beginning to look vile. I think I'm being stifled, and the golden family has blocked my view of the world outside. I'm leaving now, but this place won't notice. Another person with a blue notebook and a wool sweater will soon come in and take my place.

Untitled

Silvia Allen

Idea

Fire.

Love.

Friendship.

Jungle, green.

Rain. It's raining outside.

Music. The radio is on. Boyz II Men are singing. Gosh, they can be good. Ad now. Nutrisystem.

Change station. Now I hear beautiful jazz.

Sax.

But... through all the hustle, bustle feeling of City, the radio its transmitter, I hear the simple, repetitive music of nature, of the rain.

I turn off the flashy sounds to hear the rain. The music of the rain.

The smell of the rain. It's the first thing I notice when I step out the front door onto the porch.

The neighbors must think I'm crazy, sitting out here in the front, while it's raining, of all times. But I tried sitting on the back porch and that was absolutely impossible. I wouldn't mind so much if it was only I who got wet, but the paper would eventually get drenched. That would be quite unpleasant.

Fire.

Love.

Rain.

Jungle, again.

I breathe in. Oh, how I love the smell of the rain!

Passing the offering plate. Throw something in. Oh, watch that little hand! Sneaking in to grab some change, it is!

Car.

Car again.

Cars are noisy on the street. Especially in

the rain.

Green, green, green. Everywhere.

Drip, Drip, Drip. Faster than I can write. Everywhere.

The sky is not dark. Odd. It's white. Or a dark white, gray-ish white.

I bite down on my gum, but miss. I chomp my tongue, hard. Ow. The bloody taste. Yuck.

Wonderful smell of rain, again.

Drip, drip.

Love.

Hate.

Fire.

Sithi men; are there any women? Must get the next book. Or ask Tad Williams himself.

Love.

Fire.

Tiger, Leopard, feline eyes.

Green.

Jungle, green, again.

All these thoughts (A whole page and a half full!) chasing through my head, making no sense, having no meaning. And they are just that, thoughts, and nothing more. There's something, Something in my mind, in the wild thoughts, that is True, that is Real,... that is just beyond my reach. For It, or They, or whatever, keeps running and dancing and skipping away, laughing at me, as I reach and search and stretch but cannot bring It within my grasp.

Thought? Where are you? Where is the thought that will slow to settle to Become? To be an idea.

Where?! I cry; in desperation, I cry. I can feel you. Please... one last dying plea... come, become, come to me, and be, Idea.

The Sorcerer's Wheel

Dawn Thorne

There once was a little town in England. Its townspeople were simple and pleasant.

One day the sorcerer of all of England was driving on a back road which went by the edge of the small town. Instead of being driven in the royal coach back to the kingdom, the powerful magician drove a simple carriage pulled by two nags. The sorcerer was in a hurry because he was late for an important engagement at the king's palace. The sorcerer clenched the reins of the wagon tightly, making the carriage speed down the bumpy dirt roads. The carriage was moving so quickly that when one of the wheels went through a very low depression in the ground, its axle broke causing the sorcerer to go flying from the carriage. The sorcerer lay there unconscious for many hours until he was carried into the town by two of the citizens.

The next morning the sorcerer awoke to find himself in a small house surrounded by many people.

"Where am I?" asked the dazed sorcerer

"You are in the town of Birkshire Crossing. I'm the town doctor, Miles. We found you in the middle of the road, you were unconscious, so I brought you inside and dressed your wounds," replied Miles.

"When will I be able to leave?" asked the sorcerer.

"You can leave when you feel like it," said the doctor.

The sorcerer slowly rose out of the bed, "I must repay you and the townspeople for your kindness."

"That isn't necessary. We townsfolk were glad to help you," said the woman standing next to the doctor.

"But I must...I am the most powerful sorcerer in all of England. I shall give you something that I would only give to someone to whom I was greatly indebted. I shall give you my Wheel of Chance. Each one of the

people who live in this town can spin the Wheel once, but remember this: if the wheel is spun more than once by the same person a terrible fate will fall upon the town," he said in a grave manner. Then the sorcerer walked out of the cottage into the middle of the town. He raised his arms to the heavens and suddenly the sky became as dark as night. The wind began to howl and it started to rain. Then a bolt of lightning came down from the sky and struck the earth; the great wheel rose there. And just as quickly as it had darkened, the sky was suddenly clear again.

The sorcerer turned and walked toward his cart.

"Remember Miles: use the wheel wisely. Its powers can bring you great joy, as well as great despair. I thank you again," and off the sorcerer drove.

For many nights the townsfolk cautiously avoided the Wheel for they were afraid of its power. Then one night the townsfolk gathered around the large wheel. The town blacksmith volunteered to spin the Wheel. He walked toward the great wheel and spun it. The Wheel stopped on a section labeled 'Riche.', but nothing seemed to happen. The townsfolk became very angry, expecting to see a great show. The people returned to their homes disappointed that nothing had happened.

The next morning the people awoke to the shouting and rejoicing of the blacksmith and his family, for everything in his workshop had turned to gold. The other people in the town quickly ran to the wheel to try for their own wealth. One gained wisdom, another luck, and yet another strength. By the end of the day everyone except the doctor and his family had spun the Wheel. After a month had passed, the townspeople had changed. They had become greedy and by month's end had spent all the riches which they had received. Ignoring the sorcerer's warnings, they began

to spin the Wheel a second time.

Suddenly the wheel disappeared and the sky became very dark. The sorcerer's face appeared in the clouds, "I told you to never spin the Wheel of Chance more than once, but

you didn't listen . Now all of you will be destroyed by your greed." Just as the Wheel had come from the earth, the small town of Birkshire Crossing sank into the ground, and just as quickly as it had become dark, the sky was clear again.

Evan

Katy Kroll

He wears my kind of tuxedo
 a worn out, faded pair of jeans
 beat up, old combat boots
 a fashionably, wrinkled Sonic Youth T
 with his blended plaid work shirt
 loosely tied around his waist
 his long, stringy hair molded around his face
 he has all the necessities a boy could need
 his brown six string slung over his back
 a highly commended copy of Twin Peaks under his arm
 and of course,
 the ever useful dime.
 He smells of cheap cologne and cigarettes
 his sleek, solemn features are marred
 only by the slight bags under his eyes
 his weary face shows his tendency
 of flipping burgers by day and
 playing clubs at nite
 between the two he hardly makes enough
 to buy a Happy Meal
 (which, by the way, he loves)
 he slouches when he walks
 his dirty blond hair shadowing his face
 he noisily takes the last seat
 in the rear of the bus,
 that shows a lot about a person y'know
 his mangled Sony walkman
 is forcefully playing the new Lemonheads tape
 he flips his hair
 and thoughtfully leans over and
 asks me for the time
 I notice he's wearing a watch.

Ted is the World

Katy Kroll

Spring, I don't like spring
winter's my time.
Actually, I don't like any of the seasons;
I never really liked flowers
and I certainly don't like snow.
This world doesn't have much
to look forward to.
I do like car accidents though,
not the injuries.
I mean you're driving down the street
and all of a sudden there are all these lights.
Blue, red, white
there are people everywhere!
I always wish I knew what was going on;
still, accidents aren't a good reason to
get up every morning.
Nightline with Ted Koppel,
now there's a reason.
You can watch everything on there.
I wait for Nightline every night.
11:30 on the dot
there's Ted, and the world.
But besides that, there's not much else
because I don't like mushrooms.
God, I hate mushrooms
and tomatoes.
I never eat those.
Helicopters drive me crazy, you too?
I don't like the colors
orange, brown, or white.
I also don't go out often,
too many weirdoes.
There aren't a lot of people in the world
that I could talk to.
It doesn't matter anyway,
'cause I don't like fresh air;
come to think of it
I don't really like
these padded walls either.

Never for Me

Melissa Edwards

you use to laugh
I've seen the sparkles in your eyes
you use to sing
now I only hear your cries
you use to dance
the music moved you into my heart
you use to unite
the feelings that now bring us apart
I've seen you smile nothing
could light my day so bright
Foolishly I thought you'd laugh
that way for me,
now I see we're just not right
would it have been better glancing
at you from afar
thought we'd click
still I don't know who you are
all the happiness you had
only I couldn't see
for all your happiness
was never for me.

Because We Are Young

Rebecca Morrison

We dance upon a flimsy cloud, a deadly dance with death.
We do not fear or close our eyes; we do not hold our breath.
Our shrill and piercing laughter is heard throughout the night
Because we are young
Because we're invincible
Because we're in the right.

Distant from the cold and stinging winds of late October,
Distant, too from the real life: harsh and stern and sober,
Thinking not of what we do, we stand proud and erect
Because we are young
Because we're immortal
Because we are correct.

You understand how it should be; I see it in your face.
We are the generation; we are the supreme race.
We are ourselves, not the product of others, not daughters and not sons,
Because we are young
Because we are clever
Because we are the ones.

Disregarding rules meant to be broken anyway,
We think not of the future; we live only for today.
We will not look ahead and we have never looked behind
Because we are young
Because we are young
Because...we are blind.

Untitled

Megan Perkins

“Your grandmother brought up the family you know.”
 the line I expect
 his favorite line
 my grandpa.

hero of World War II
 unsung to himself
 but not to me
 “I was in it too long.”
 Nazi flag
 purple heart
 decrepit medals
 crinkled photos

“I wouldn’t have made it through if it wasn’t for your grandmother.”
 never talks of men he saved
 the war he won
 only talks of others

jokes when he is serious
 gold teeth glinting
 gratey laugh
 squinting eyes
 they follow me

selfless attitude
 “Pick a number.”
 a lottery ticket in his hand
 empty
 “The money goes to you.”

the freckles on his balding head
 in contrast with my lion’s mane
 “Better put a hat on grandpa.”
 “Do you think I need a haircut?”

grandma
 always grandma
 “She’s pretty sexy, your grandmother.
 I couldn’t live without her.”
 I couldn’t live without him

life is so content to him
 his reclining chair
 his Reeboks—a symbol of his freedom

his hands resting on his stomach
like a pregnant woman checking on her unborn child

his pills
like Sweet Tarts
a symbol that fills the air with apprehension
just as scary as they are innocent

"I'm going to die one day you know."
his eyes shift
I stare wet holes into him
smudges always on his glasses
no.
I can't imagine life...



A Day In The Life

Erik Grimaldi

The hallway leading to the stage was long, narrow, and filled with all types of rock n' roll personas. He could hear the roaring crowd tribal-chanting his name. Indistinct voices unified into one thunderous and booming headache. He passed by all of the inebriated roadies, strung out upon couch after couch, and past all of the well endowed groupies who were all too eager to please.

Stepping through the murky doorway and underneath the flashing strobe lights, he appeared as a rock god to the masses. A night of ear-punishing rock awaited, if only he could make it to the microphone...

Of the many loyal fans who flocked to the Garden on this cold, November evening, it was Danny who was making his first trip. He and his best friend had been given a ride to the concert by Danny's father. He was their transportation home, too. They were to meet him at the front of the building at exactly 11:30pm. No exceptions. Any later and who knows what kind of swift and terrible punishment might be handed down!

Clutching their tickets tightly, the boy and his friend passed nervously through security. They joined the herd and proceeded to move ever-so-slowly towards the seating section. There were 18,000 seats ready to be occupied; the boys searched aimlessly.

Eventually, just when the crowd looked as though it was about to lose its patience, Danny first noticed a fragmented silhouette, and then finally an entire body stagger onto the stage. As the crowd cheered in unison, the young boy remained seated, mesmerized by the whole affair, underneath the flashing strobe lights.

He had never seen anything like this before. Just a small town boy, he had no idea that this was what it was to be a part of the world of rock n' roll. With this realization behind him, and after gazing at the others

about him, he dutifully stood up and began pumping his fist wildly into the air, spewing out obscenities one after another. He suddenly felt good n' ready for the time of his life.

Shouting the words rather than singing them, the tired performer rigidly held onto the microphone stand. Paying no mind to the "lame-ass security," he smoked joint after joint until his eyes were so blood shot that everything he looked at seemed to ignite his eyes with pain. God, he couldn't wait to get this over with.

Doing the best that he could under the drunken circumstances, he tore through each song as fast as time would allow so that he might be able to catch a few hours of sleep for once. By the time the show was over, he was barely able to make it offstage and into the temporary comfort of the encircling lustful crowd.

After the houselights went on and the crowd dispersed, giggles could be heard from backstage...

As Danny and his friend stepped into the car, they looked at the clock on the dashboard 11: 24pm. Whew!

During the two-hour drive home, both boys managed to fall asleep despite all of the excitement that was running through them. With visions of sugar plums dancing in his head, Danny saw himself on stage, decked out in heavy metal garb, and singing along with his favorite tunes. As his father pulled into the driveway, each boy entered that state of semi-consciousness which allows one to make it from one place to another, but not much else. Without brushing their teeth, they climbed into bed, because school starts much too early. What it must be like to be a rock n' roll star, Danny thought...

Three days later, Danny's particular rock n' roll star died. "Due to the excesses of the life," said the coroner.

Black Women, I'm Sorry

Omekongo Dibinga

Black women I'm sorry,
For all the neglect.
Over five hundred years here,
And no respect.

So please forgive us;
We're steadily prying.
I'll make sure we get there,
Or, sister, die trying.

I really hope my apologies are accepted
For not living up to all you expected.

But there's a force moving against us.
It's like a brick wall.
It's there to oppress us,
And make sure we fall.

We're set up to fail,
'Cause they set up the system.
Though we're no longer for sale,
A price is still given.

They try to make us like them,
To tear us apart.
But so much unlike them,
Our family's our heart.

They gave us drugs,
And T.V. aside.
To teach us their methods,
...a slow genocide.

They make themselves look superior,
And make us lose hope.
We're made to look inferior,
And take it as a joke.

Black women, I've tried!
But the struggle's so hard.
But with us side by side,
It's worth the reward.

So again we're learning,
To support one another.
To realize our strengths,
Of you, sister and mother.



Homelessness

Jeff Abrams

It's time to get up,
when the cop,
so arrogant and uncaring,
shines a flashlight
in your face.

It's time for breakfast,
when you can find
anything edible,
anything to try to ease
your hunger pains

It's time for a shower,
when clouds darken the sky,
the next rainstorm comes,
and you're able to clean
yourself up.

It's time to go clothes shopping,
when the local shelter
gets a shipment of
donated clothes.

It's time to get warm,
when your feet get
so numb,
you can't feel the bitter
cold anymore.

It's time to go to sleep,
when you're able to find
a shelter with a bed
or at worst
an empty park bench.

It's time to get up,
when the cop,
so arrogant and uncaring,
shines a flashlight
in your face.

The Vegetable Garden

Danielle Holland

The little girl stood out on the balcony that overlooked the back; a block of lush greenery subdivided into individual plots for each building; it was a tropical island in the midst of a crowded, cramped, dirty city.

The plot next door was occupied by a Chinese family, and they were out there now with their broad, odd-shaped hats. Directly across from her was a broad-faced Italian woman, flushed by the heat, who was unpinning her laundry to the line that ran from her window where the girl was standing.

In the summer evening, the garden was like a baby wrapped in a swaddling cloth of humidity, heat, and swollen thunderclouds.

It was after the stroke that the old woman moved in with them. She was eighty-seven and it was time for her to relinquish her independence. She and the young woman shared a room. The posters of the rock stars were taken down in favor of somber religious portraits: the Virgin Mother and Child in medieval tones of gilded gold, and the mournful portrait of hollow-eyed Christ. They slept in twin beds, side by side, with matching coverlets of blue, and the granddaughter kept things clean because people were always coming in unexpectedly.

The little girl was at her grandmother's house, Nana, as she called her. The little girl loved to be hugged, and Nana was the only person she knew with the time or the desire to hug her for as long and as tightly as she wanted to be hugged.

Her grandma lived in an apartment decorated almost entirely in beige, and she let the little girl bang away on her little standup piano while she crocheted, and she told her stories about the man in all the pictures, the grandfather who had died before the little girl had been born.

And at night, they would huddle together in Nana's bed, under the afghans made of rust-colored yarns. And the little girl would

tell her grandma how she didn't like pink, because she was sick of everything that was for little girls being pink, and her grandma would tell the little girl not to rub her eyes with her hands - to use anything but her hands, even the bed sheets.

There were many visitors. The nuns, in their austere navy skirts and outmoded pointy-collared blouses, who spoke in hushed and solemn tones, sipping tea delicately, and always brought Irish soda bread wrapped in tin foil. The young woman avoided them. And there were the pretty granddaughters, the young woman's cousins, with their gliding silvery laughs and long dark hair that swung gracefully down their backs when they walked, flaunting their youth and splendor. The young woman resented them. And there were the old woman's daughters, the granddaughter's aunts, with their stiffly sprayed hair, care-worn faces, warm brogues, and cheerful resignedness. The young woman took comfort in them.

The girl would always stay home with Nana- even when her mother took her brothers to the zoo and to see the Statue of Liberty. She didn't mind, though - she took a certain pride in the fact that it was only she who had stayed behind to take care of Nana.

And she would make an omelet (that was the only thing the little girl could cook) and oatmeal with lots of brown sugar and milk for her grandma; and for her own breakfast she ate Oreo Cookies smothered in cream cheese.

And she would help Nana clean. They would take the mops and the brooms and the buckets out of the kitchen closet to scrub the floor. And the girl would squeeze the sponges as she watched Nana standing in her beige and yellow checked housedress with her bunioned gnarled toes at the end of stalwart purple-veined legs as she mopped the floor. And the girl would laugh as Nana talked

about what would happen when Nana "kicked the bucket" not just because she couldn't imagine her grandmother not alive but because it was the first time she had heard that particular euphemism for death and it seemed there was something absurd about saying that when there was really a yellow bucket full of sloshy soap suds right there in the middle of the linoleum floor.

And the old woman would sit in the

brown fingers.

The little girl stood on that balcony, licking a rapidly melting ice-cream cone with a childish pleasure unmitigated by guilt over cavities or calories. Nana was always slipping her bonbons and taking her to the corner store underneath the roaring trains for chocolate egg creams. Mama would have been mortified.

There were sheets of white billowing in



heavy leather arm chair with her swollen feet and twisted toes resting on a foot cushion, and she would crochet, as her dentures clicked together when she sucked her breath against them. And the old woman would sit in the chair and watch television for hours, not realizing that the volume was turned all the way off. And the old woman would lie awake in bed at night, reciting rosaries endlessly in harsh, hoarse, ragged snatches, and the heavy metal crucifix would clink against the rosary beads in those stunted, knobby-knuckled

the breeze, as the women reeled in the lines and took off the laundry in anticipation of rain. In the distance there were the irritated wails of crying babies, the tinny laughter of loud television sets, the screams of police sirens, and the circus-like music of a nearby ice-cream truck. The plots were swarming with people and teeming with activity. The girl was continuously startled at the emergence of yet another gardener from under some shrub. And everywhere there were children.

This was Nana's vegetable garden.

The bathroom began to smell of arthritic cream, denture cleanser, urine, and antiseptic air freshener. But nothing could cover the decay.

The young woman would flinch when she helped the old woman out of bed and smelled the stench of body odor, foul breath and decay. And she began to avert her eyes at mealtime so she wouldn't have to see the fleshy bits of food caught between the yellow-brown-gray false teeth, repulsive in their decay. And she began to recoil from embracing the old woman so she wouldn't have to smell the rancid perfume and talcum powder that couldn't cover the decay.

Nana was standing in the midst of tomatoes, and green stalks coiled around wooden stakes. She was weeding the garden, and at her side stood two green plastic garbage bags, almost overflowing.

The little girl smiled to herself, and she knew somewhere in her heart that she would remember this moment forever.

And then one day something happened. The old woman didn't get out of bed. They cleaned out her closet, put her Bible in a box, and took down the pictures of the Madonna and her Child and the portrait of a bleeding Christ with his crown of thorns.

The pregnant storm clouds hung thickly over the sky, dominating the faded remains of a colorful sunset. Nana waved, smiled and hoisted the overladen garbage bags over her weathered shoulders and walked up the stairs to the balcony where the girl stood.

And the visitors came back again. The nuns, in strained tones of black, polite, demure, comforting, sipping tea delicately as they offered their condolences. And the grandchildren came, the pretty long-haired girls in mourning dresses of black to match their red lipstick, with their kerchiefs of frothy white lace to dab their dreamy eyes. And the daughters came, still careworn and stiffly coiffed, no longer cheerfully resigned, but weeping resolutely. And everyone brought Irish soda bread

wrapped in tin foil.

Mothers began calling the names of their children and there was a sudden flurry of activity as the first few drops fell. Thunder rolled in the distance, and Nana quickly opened the door and hustled the girl in. The two garbage bags spilled over onto the floor. The weeds and dirt fell onto the muted beige carpet. All at once insects crawled out from among the weeds and began to scurry across the floor. The little girl screamed. Nana killed them by stomping on them with her bare feet. And the little girl was suddenly grateful those ancient looking, malformed feet.'

Nana smiled, told her they'd go for an egg cream later when the rain stopped on the grocery store and told her to go play some of her beautiful music on the piano while she got her crocheting done. So the little girl skipped down the beige-carpeted hall past the Eagle with an undercrest on red, white and blue, past the bronze bust of John F. Kennedy, past the picture of FDR, past a picture of the Pope, and she went to play the piano underneath a picture of the dead man who was Grandfather Patrick as Nana crocheted an afghan with yarns of rust colored shades. And in the distance, under the brassy piano tones, and the rumbling of the thunder, she could hear the carnival sounds of an ice cream truck as it departed in to the night pelted by impatient summer raindrops.

After the funeral, the young woman put the old woman's afghans on the beds, on top of the matching blue coverlets. The bathroom began to recover its former pleasantly-disinfected smell. And she sat in the heavy leather armchair, and listened to the phantom sounds of a heavy metal crucifix clinking against rosary beads and she wondered shy she was so numb. Why she couldn't be sad, or hadn't felt that childhood love and devotion for such a long time. She wanted to feel again, and so she remembered. She remembered the egg creams underneath the trains and the beige colored halls of Nana's old apartment, she remembered the vegetable garden.

And somewhere it began to rain.

Pigeons

Andy Kwong

It started when I was about three. My father took me to the Boston Common to feed the pigeons. I fed them near home, too. I remember the time my mother found a bag of moldy bread left in the refrigerator. We went to a nearby alley and dropped the buns onto the street. The moment they came out of the bag, pigeons from all around the neighborhood seemed to come. They fought for position and landing space. They landed on top of one another. It was a feeding frenzy. A piece of bread would end up in the air and five pigeons would go for it. The torn end shred fell to earth along with the birds. All the while cooing echoed in the alley. I was very happy that I could help feed these poor creatures. Then we moved. But my brother and I noticed many birds near the local McDonald's. Every once in a while we would go and scatter some bread crumbs. When we were far enough away, pigeons, tiny, brown birds and gulls came. A profound sense of joy came over us that we could do this. For a few minutes, at least, nothing in the world mattered except the sight of birds feeding peacefully and two young boys watching them. Now, my parents are busy all the time as are my sibling and myself; the pigeons have not seen me for a long time.

Untitled

Tom Kiley

Nestled in the small hills of the small town lay a lake, a small, pleasant lake.

And every morning he would wake up and row out just so far, and drop a hook. And he would sit and wait, and sit and wait, and as time mysteriously vanished he would see the sun disappear behind the small hills, casting rays of brilliant pink across the soft August sky.

And he would row back.

And then years passed, and the town grew, and so did he. Then he brought her to the lake, the ever-pleasant lake, and as time vanished and the sun disappeared behind the little hills and the sky turned pink, he would row out with her, and watch as the stars speckled the deep, black night.

And he would row back.

And the town grew, and so did he. And he brought his grandchildren there, to the lake, the very pleasant lake. And he watched as they played on the docks and swam in the waters as the roar of motorboats surrounded them.

And on that day he would not row out.

And the town grew bigger, and he grew older. He returned to this lake, this no longer pleasant lake, where the multitudes had converged.

And he dared not row out.

And the time vanished and the sun disappeared on this lake, his lake, his once pleasant lake.

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